

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Dunbar Public Schoolother names/site number Dunbar School Community Center**2. Location**street & number 113 Steekee StreetN/A ☐ not for publicationcity or town Loudon☐ vicinity N/Astate TN code TN county Loudon code 105 zip code 37774**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer – Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet☐ determined eligible for the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Dunbar Public School

Name of Property

Loudon Co., TN

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1		buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rosenwald School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

roof METAL

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1923-1957

Significant Dates

c. 1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Samuel L. (Rosenwald Community School Plan Designer)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Dunbar Public School

Name of Property

Loudon Co., TN

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre Loudon 131NE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 740873 3957886
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jane Davis, graduate student, Carroll Van West, Elizabeth H. Moore
organization Center for Historic Preservation date May 18, 2007
street & number 1416 East Main Street; MTSU, Box 80 telephone 615 898 2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch Map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name St. Peter Lodge No 30 F & A M & Community Center -contact: Anna Henley, 617 Cedar Street, Loudon, TN 37774
street & number Steekee St telephone 865-458-2335
city or town Loudon state TN Zip code 37774

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

DESCRIPTION

The c. 1923 Dunbar Public School is located in a residential neighborhood southeast of Loudon's (pop. 4,476) courthouse square. Built with money from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the building is a local adaptation of the standardized Plan #20 from the fund's *Community School Plans* book. The one story frame building is covered with beveled novelty siding, has a historic (at least pre 1953) metal shingle cross gable roof, and a concrete and concrete block foundation. Multi-light windows, simple brackets, and two single leaf entries are distinguishing features on the exterior of the school. Inside, the two-room school retains original beaded board wainscoting, wood floors, and light fixtures. In 1953 a small concrete block addition was added to the rear of the school. The school retains a high degree of integrity.

The west facade has a projecting center room with a bank of four, double-hung, nine-over-nine, wood sash windows and a front-gable roof with a rectangular, louvered gable-end vent. Flanking the gabled center section are shed roof covered entrances with single leaf paneled wood doors. Both entrances have a stoop of two concrete stairs leading to a vestibule. To the north and south of the entries there are double-hung, six-over-six wood sash windows. At the north edge of the façade there is a one-story gable roof extension that is set back from the main part of the façade.

The north elevation of the extension is a solid weatherboard wall with rectangular vents placed into the concrete foundation and a rectangular, louvered gable end vent. West of the extension the elevation has a fixed nine-light window that replaced an original double-hung six-over-six window c. 1953. East of the extension the one story, shed roof 1953 addition is visible.

The east elevation contains two banks of windows, one for each classroom, and the 1953 addition. The 1953 addition also covered another bank of three windows that was located in the center of the elevation, with a new exterior door cut into one of the windows, while the other two windows were covered with board. A bank of four double-hung nine-over-nine sash windows remains intact to the north of the addition, while one window was covered by the addition on the south, leaving only three double-hung nine-over-nine sash windows. The one story concrete block addition is near the center of the elevation and has no window or door openings. It was built to add restrooms to the school. Extending south from this is a c. 1990 addition that leads to the basement.

The south elevation is a weatherboard wall with one double-hung six-over-six sash window at the west side of the elevation and one small two-pane window at the ground level at the east corner. The shed roof concrete block addition is visible at this elevation, as is a flat roof entry to the basement from c. 1990.

The interior consists of two equally sized classrooms, two small rooms once used as a library and an office, and a projecting center portion for the industrial room. Movable partitions and a three-panel wood door separate the two classrooms. The original chalkboards line the walls of the gable ends, or northeastern and southwestern walls. A simple chair rail divides the walls' lower portion of vertical wood paneling and plaster upper portion. Several impressive interior features are extant: original light fixtures, five-paneled wood interior doors, wood floors, and beaded board wainscoting. In the kitchen and hall, plastic tile was installed over the wood floor c. 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

The Dunbar Public School has an original wood stage in its south classroom. The plan allowed for the folding wood partitions to be opened and thus both rooms could serve as an “auditorium” for school presentations, theater, concerts, and public meetings. The industrial room was renovated into a school library c. 1953 and a room for domestic arts instruction, with kitchen machines installed in the old library space off of the north entrance.

An interesting adaptation to Plan 20 of this Rosenwald School was the creation of a basement and its use as a cafeteria for students. Rarely did Rosenwald schools—or any rural schools of the 1920s—feature an interior cafeteria. Cafeterias incorporated into the school designs became more common in the New Deal era. The cafeteria space remained in use throughout the building's life as a school. The large open space is now used for storage. A stage also was not part of the standardized Plan 20 but other Rosenwalds of this general plan type have a stage, such as the Free Hills Rosenwald School (NR 11/15/96) in Clay County.

Restrooms were installed at the rear of the building c. 1953. At the same time a new access door to the basement was installed along with new kitchen equipment. Prior to this renovation access to the basement kitchen and dining area was only available from the outside of the building.

The setting of the school remains uncluttered. A small graveled parking area fronts the building. The building faces houses that are across the street. In front of the school is a flagpole (date unknown, but at least c. 1953). Playground equipment is no longer at the school. These traits mean that the school retains the setting and feeling of a school on the outskirts of the town.

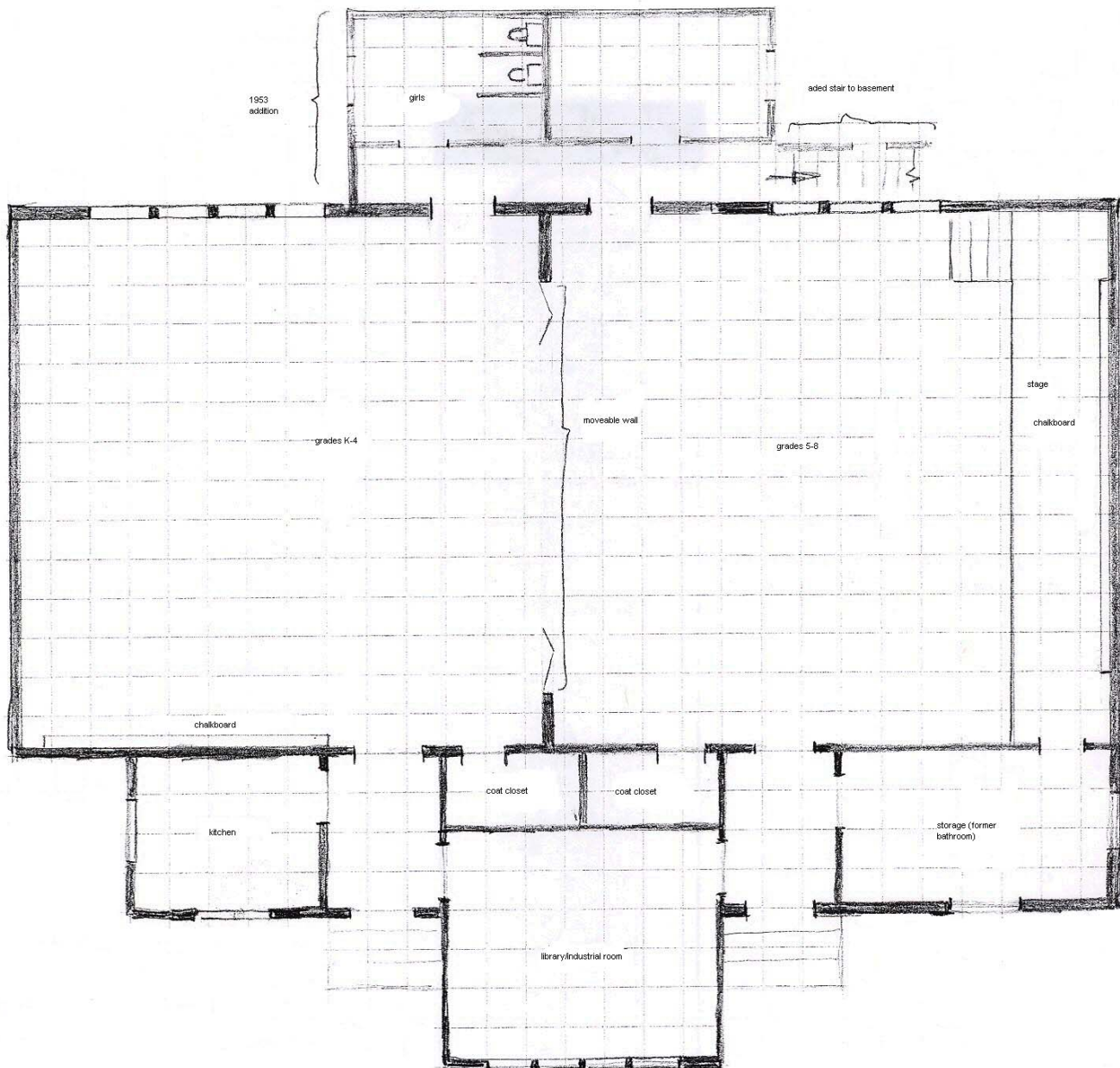
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

Sketch plan
Not to scale
N ←

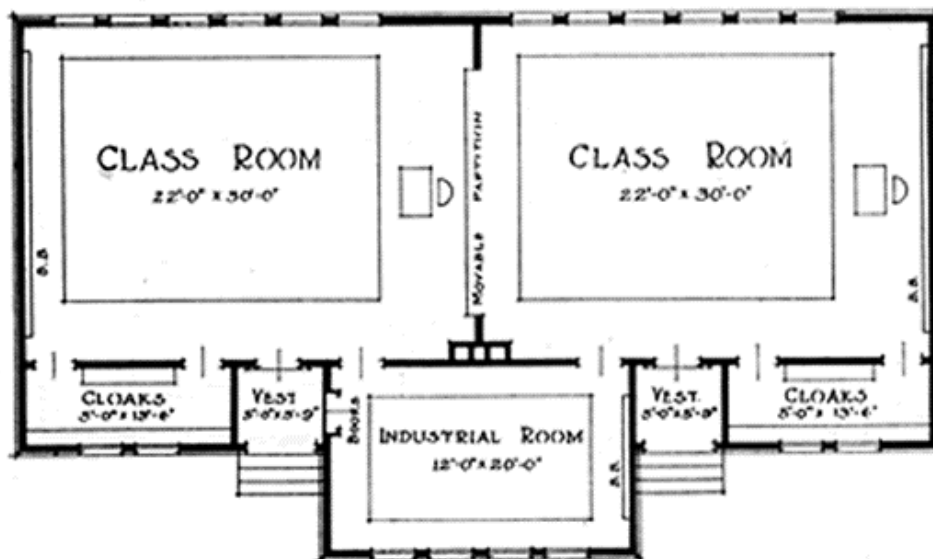


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN



FLOOR PLAN No 20
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5 Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Dunbar Public School in Loudon, Loudon County, Tennessee, is a locally significant property eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical significance in education, social history, and African American ethnic heritage. Built c. 1923, with support from the Julius Rosenwald Fund's School Building Program, the school is associated with African American elementary public school education from the 1920s to the Civil Rights Movement. It was the county seat's only African American public school. As a community center, the building hosted political rallies and events such as community improvement fundraisers, school fundraisers, beauty contests, music concerts, and public lectures from local and state education and agricultural officials. The building also is eligible under Criterion C as a noteworthy example of the adaptation of Rosenwald standardized plans to the perceived aesthetic needs and wants of a rural community. Such architecturally defining features as original light fixtures, five-paneled wood interior doors, wood floors, wood stage, and beaded board wainscoting are extant.

Sears-Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald funded his first school for Tennessee African Americans in 1915. In 1919, Rosenwald hosted a meeting in Nashville for education reformers who wanted to establish a rural school building program. They created a Nashville office, which would review requests from local communities and provide money from the Julius Rosenwald Fund (JRF) according to the number of teachers planned for each school. As part of the requirement of the fund, communities had to provide for funding that was equal to or greater than the amount provided by the Rosenwald Fund. The JRF would provide up to \$400 for a one-teacher school or \$500 for a two-teacher school. The rest came from public funds and, largely, from the African American community itself. The schools were not only to be built out of these joint monies, but were to be furnished as well. In addition, the land and the school would become public property, managed by the public school system upon completion of the building. By the time the program closed in 1932, the Rosenwald Fund provided \$291,250 to help build 354 schools in Tennessee. Additional monies came from tax funds (\$1,354,157), contributions from white community members (\$28,027), and contributions from African American community members (\$296,388).¹

The African American community of Loudon County experienced significant change in the 1920s. The community dipped in numbers, as by 1930 approximately 35 percent fewer blacks lived in Loudon County as in 1920. The African American community was concentrated in Loudon, the county seat, and Lenoir City, the county's largest and most industrialized town. For instance, African Americans only made up 4 percent of the county's total population, but they comprised almost 20 percent of the county's urban population. Most blacks worked in the service sector or in factories; only 42 percent in 1930 worked in agriculture.²

The Dunbar Public School, like many other Rosenwald Schools across Tennessee, represented a new higher level of commitment by state and local officials to the education of African Americans, although much of new commitment focused only on vocational education offerings, represented at the Dunbar school, as in most

¹ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, "Julius Rosenwald Fund," Carroll Van West and Connie L. Lester, et. al., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 496.

² Charles S. Johnson, *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 215. See also Melissa Walker, *All We Knew Was to Farm* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 224-6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

Rosenwald plans, by the industrial room placed between the two classrooms. The Dunbar Public School employed two teachers and was built at a cost of \$5,700. The African American community raised \$200, public funds accounted for another \$4,400 and the Rosenwald Fund provided \$1,100.³ Typically the black community raised as much money if not more than the funds provided by the Rosenwald program. At Loudon, however, the Rosenwald Fund provided five times the amount of monies as raised by the local African American community.⁴

Two teachers and a principal worked at Dunbar, covering kindergarten through eighth grade. The teachers covered the standard subjects like English, math, and science, with a music teacher, Ozell Howard, coming once a month and a county agricultural agent providing 4-H and other agricultural trade training. The school also hosted an annual May Day event and the yearly ceremony for eighth grade graduation. These were important community events and typically they turned into fundraisers for the school.

The Dunbar School in Loudon was the only Rosenwald school in the county for some 258 school-age children countywide in 1930. Its modern, four-room building was far superior to the county's existing African American one-room or two-room schools, which had an average value of only \$771 in 1930. Thus, the Dunbar School became a landmark of community pride for all of Loudon County.⁵ In fact, the school became a place for community events throughout the year. In the summer, music concerts and picnics took place there. During election campaigns, political rallies happened at the school. Evening events included public lectures from state and local government officials, touting extension programs, Social Security, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s the issues of voting rights and civil rights. The greater community function was one reason a local African American lodge, the St. Peter Masonic Lodge, purchased the building once the school was closed in 1965.⁶

By serving this broader community function, the school fulfilled one of the basic goals of the Rosenwald Fund's program. Rosenwald publications emphasized that "service to the community" was a top priority for the school building. The 1924 *Community School Plans* stated:

In planning the schoolhouse it should be kept in mind that the best modern schoolhouse is one which is designed to serve the entire community for twelve months in the year. Hence in all larger buildings at least a room for industries and for the use of the adult members of the community is important.

Wherever possible a good auditorium, large enough to seat the entire community, should be erected in

³ It is not known why this school received more than the usual amount of money from the JRF.

⁴ "Rosenwald Schools, Tennessee," Julius Rosenwald Fund Papers, Fisk University Archives, Fisk University, Nashville.

⁵ Charles S. Johnson, *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 215.

⁶ Interview with Anna Henley and Stanley Blair by Jane Davis and Elizabeth Moore, March 16, 2007, Dunbar School, Loudon.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

connection with every community school. If there are not sufficient funds for an auditorium, two adjoining classrooms with a movable partition may be made to serve this purpose. While movable partitions are not always satisfactory, they are much preferred to no assembly facilities.⁷

Dunbar Public School is a unique place in rural Loudon County where the interplay and symbiotic associations that characterized African American community institutions in the age of Jim Crow take on lasting physical form. The surviving school is a significant artifact of progressive school architecture, African American education, and symbols of African American ethnic heritage. The property is the only surviving Rosenwald school in Loudon County and is an excellent example of the types of schools the program built in Tennessee's Appalachian counties, where fewer African Americans resided than in the other regions of the state.

⁷ *Community School Plans*, (Nashville: Julius Rosenwald fund, 1924), 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 8

Dunbar Public School, Loudon County, TN

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Community School Plans. Nashville: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1924.

"Dunbar Graduation Held." *Loudon County Herald*, June 4, 1964.

Henley, Alice and Stanley Blair. Interview by Jane Davis and Elizabeth Moore, March 16, 2007 at Dunbar School. Notes in possession of MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. "Julius Rosenwald Fund." Carroll Van West and Connie L. Lester, et al. *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998. pp. 495-496.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *Preserving Rosenwald Schools*. Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2003.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006.

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Rosenwald Foundation, "Two Teacher Plan to face East or West."
<<http://www.rosenwaldplans.org/SchoolPlans/TwoTeachEW/TwoTeachEW.htm>>. (22 July 2004).

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 9

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Dunbar Public School is located at 113 Steekee Street, Loudon, Loudon County, Tennessee, on parcel 8 as documented in the attached Loudon County Tax Map 41G.

Boundary Justification

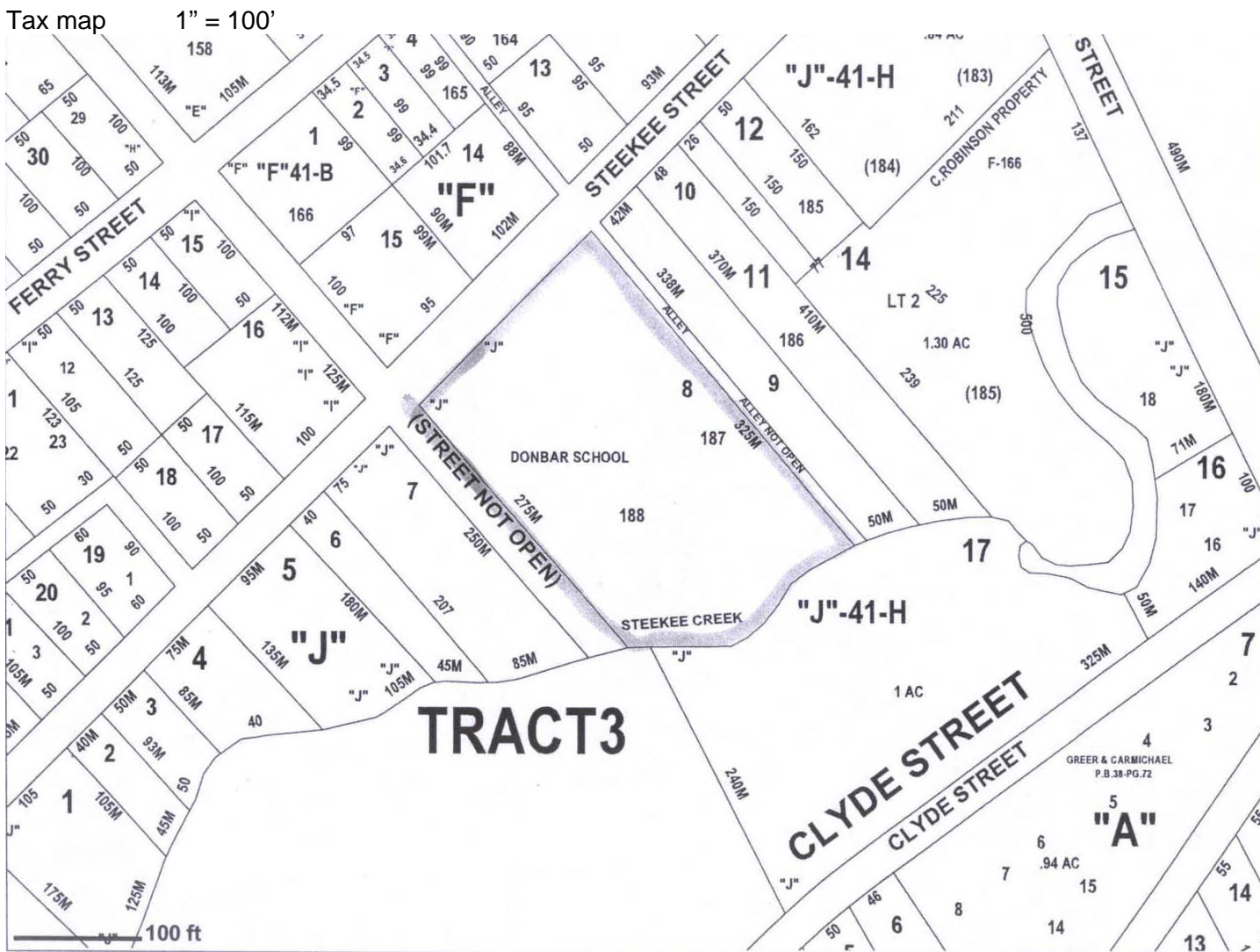
The nominated property contains the historic and current legal boundaries associated with the Dunbar Public School.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

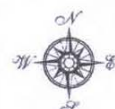
Section number 10 Page 10

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN



LOUDON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

DISCLAIMER: THIS MAP IS FOR PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY. IT WAS CONSTRUCTED FROM PROPERTY INFORMATION RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS, AND IS NOT CONCLUSIVE AS TO LOCATION OF PROPERTY OR LEGAL OWNERSHIP.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 11

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Dunbar Public School, Loudon, Loudon Co., TN

Photos by: Elizabeth Moore
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: January, March 2007
Negatives/digital images: Tennessee Historical Commission

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, west façade, facing east |
| 2 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, window detail, west façade, facing east |
| 3 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, entrance detail, west façade, facing east |
| 4 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, west façade and north elevation, facing southeast |
| 5 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, north elevation, facing south |
| 6 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, east elevation, facing southwest |
| 7 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, east elevation, facing west |
| 8 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, east and south elevation, facing northwest |
| 9 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, south elevation, facing north |
| 10 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, south elevation and west façade, facing northeast |
| 11 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, interior entrance, facing southwest |
| 12 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Industrial Room (current library), facing southwest |
| 13 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Industrial Room (current library), facing north |
| 14 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Library (current kitchen), facing north |
| 15 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Office (current storage), facing southwest |
| 16 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, south classroom, facing northwest |
| 17 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, south classroom, facing south |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 12

Dunbar Public School, Loudon Co., TN

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 18 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, classrooms, facing north |
| 19 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, north classroom, facing north |
| 20 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, north classroom, facing east |
| 21 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, bathroom addition, facing east |
| 22 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, rear stair from basement, facing north |
| 23 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Basement, facing north |
| 24 of 24 | Dunbar Public School, Basement, facing southeast |